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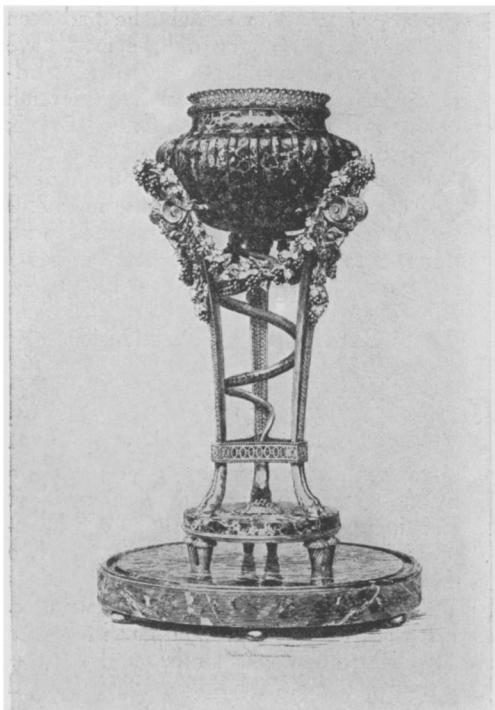
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Tripod by Gouthières (etching)

J. Jacquemart

### The Jacquemart Collection

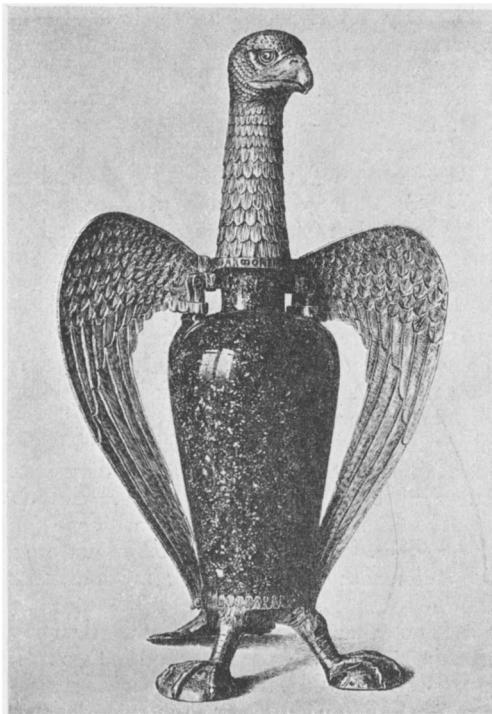
THE Print Department of the Museum has recently acquired a number of original drawings by Jules Jacquemart, together with a practically complete collection of his etched work. Jacquemart, besides having been a brilliant exponent of that finished product of French civilization, a great art connoisseur, collector and writer, was also a master water-colorist, and, according to such a critic as Hamerton, "the most marvellous etcher of still life who ever existed in the world." What gives a special value to the present set of over one thousand pieces is that it comes directly from the artist's own portfolio.

When Jacquemart died, in 1880, he bequeathed two sets to his friend Louis Gonse, the well-known art connoisseur, who had compiled an admirable catalogue of his work. One was immediately presented to the French nation and has ever since been treasured in the Reserve of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The other remained quietly in its *carton*, undisturbed for forty-one years, until one day it suddenly crossed the ocean to rest forever among the treasures of this Museum. Mr. Gonse tells us that Jacquemart had nothing but love for America and that he considered a museum the best final abode for his work. That this great artist's wishes should have been so completely gratified is a thing to be rejoiced at.

Jacquemart's career was a short and an incredibly brilliant one. His was a life dedicated exclusively to beauty and to the noble work of

teaching others how to understand and enjoy it. Himself the son of a noted art connoisseur and collector, he was born among art treasures, and in a remarkably short time became an impeccable draughtsman and a master of all the problems of etching. Indeed, he is generally considered by critics to have carried the technique of that art, as one has said, "beyond the limits of the impossible." In the heyday of the Second Empire, at a time when a cultivated public was collecting as no people had ever collected before, he was commissioned by its leaders to reproduce no end of art treasures. The marvellous brilliance of his etched plates, appearing with satisfying regularity in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* and various sumptuously gotten-up publications, made such a sensation that they inspired other nations to follow suit. The result was a remarkable improvement in the general appreciation of art and a renewed ambition on the part of all museum authorities to acquire nothing but the best of everything.

What characterized Jacquemart's art was the ever rare combination of manual skill and artistic perceptions. Furthermore he was a miracle of conscientiousness. His plates depicting antique jewelry with its infinite refinement of detail, sixteenth century bookbindings covered with most intricate decoration in gold, silver and colors, antique and Renaissance armor with plates full of gold arabesques set into ivory, must be seen and studied in order to understand how wonderfully beautiful still life can be when it is etched by an



Antique Porphyry Vase (etching)

J. Jacquemart

artist who is not only a technician, but also a painter, a musician and a poet. The *magnum opus* of the collection is the set of sixty plates which represent the Gems and Jewels of the Louvre, the greatest treasures of the French nation. He spent four years at the work and made of each plate a masterpiece. Here are a number of national heirlooms of great historic interest, like the swords of Chilperic, Charlemagne and Francis I., jewels of the eleventh century, antique porphyry vases mounted in the Middle Ages, crystal vases which belonged to Valois kings, the gifts of the city of Florence to Marie de Medicis, sconces of cameos, agates and pearls, the clasp of the mantle of St. Louis, the cup of Mithridates, and a score of rock crystal chalices scintillating with light. The rendering of texture is everywhere done with complete realism and with an exquisite pictorial effect.

Nothing, however, is more subtle than his illustrations for his father's works, "L'Histoire de la Porcelaine" and "L'Histoire de la Céramique," or more picturesque than his reproductions of two score famous paintings, notably the sets of twelve he made fifty years ago for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His etched flower compositions are the essence of grace, and his set of American Medals an imperishable monument to his spirit of truth. Five years before he died — from consumption, in 1880 — he took up water colors, and with that medium built up a great reputation and a fortune. As a rule his views of the Riviera have the freshness of the dew-laden flower; they are, however, to be found almost exclusively in European museums. In

America we shall, unfortunately, know only the etchings, but, as Mr. Hamerton wrote, "here he remained master of his subject, master of his means, a prince in a fairy princedom of his own, full of enchanted treasures, full of gold and opal and pearls, of porphyry and sardonyx and agate, of jasper and lapis lazuli, all in the deepest and truest sense his own: for what rich man ever so truly possessed these things?"

L. R. METCALFE.



*Church of Santa Maria de Mur*

#### A Catalonian Fresco

THE Museum has recently acquired a Byzantine fresco which originally decorated the apse of the small Romanesque church of Santa Maria de Mur in Catalonia. Many of these village churches in the foothills of the Spanish Pyrenees have fallen on evil times and threaten to become ruins. To preserve the mural paintings several have been removed to the Museum of Barcelona. The Boston Museum now possesses the only one which has left the country.

The whole fresco covers a surface of about twenty-two by twenty-four feet. The shell of the apse was occupied by a painting of Christ in an "ovale aigu," in the act of blessing, surrounded by the symbols of the four Evangelists. Below this ran a zone of the Twelve Apostles, life size, separated into groups by three windows. Two of these windows had their jambs painted with the story of Cain and Abel. Again, below this there followed various scenes from the New Testament.

The fresco is not yet in a condition to be exhibited, but it is the intention of the Trustees to install it in a fitting manner in the Museum galleries, and plans are being prepared.



*Console Table (drawing)* J. Jacquemart

AN EXHIBITION OF MINIATURES, arranged by the American Society of Miniature Painters, will be held in the Evans Galleries from November 19 to December 10. The exhibition is expected to include between fifty and sixty miniatures by American artists.